Facts
XBL

(Exclusive Bus Lane)
& FAQs

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THE PORT AUTHORITY OF NY & NJ
www.panynj.gov

Facts XBL

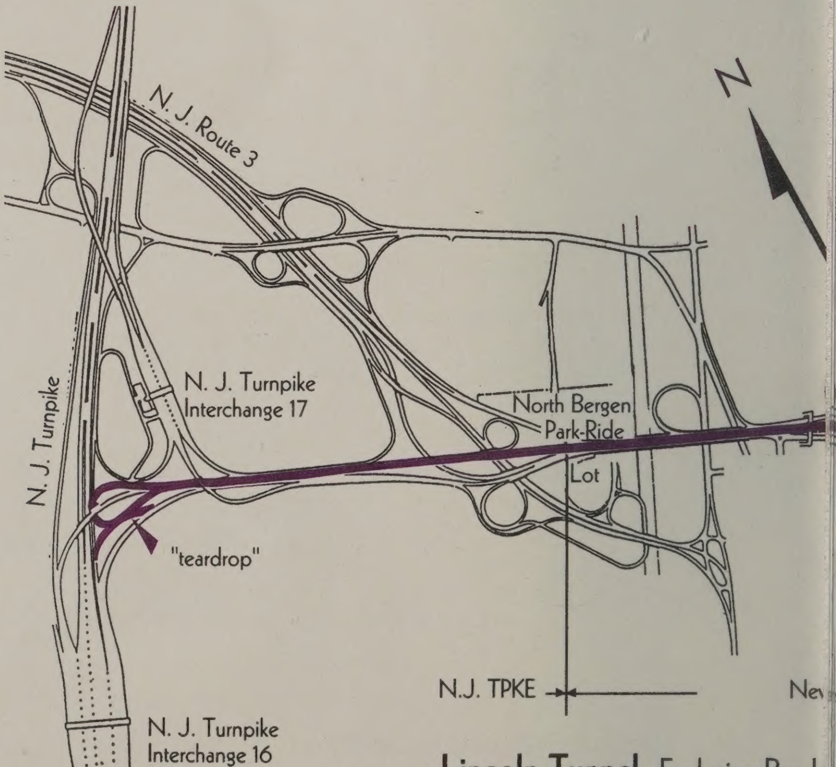
Dear Customers:

Many of you have called or written to us with questions about the Exclusive Bus Lane (XBL) operation. The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey has designed this brochure to answer the most frequently asked questions, share information with you about how the XBL operates and discuss plans we have for the future.

I hope you find the information useful.

Kostas J. Skruodys
General Manager
Lincoln Tunnel

If you have questions or comments about the XBL, please call the customer connection line at 1-800-221-9903 weekdays, 10 am-4 pm, or visit our Web site at www.panynj.gov and click on "Feedback".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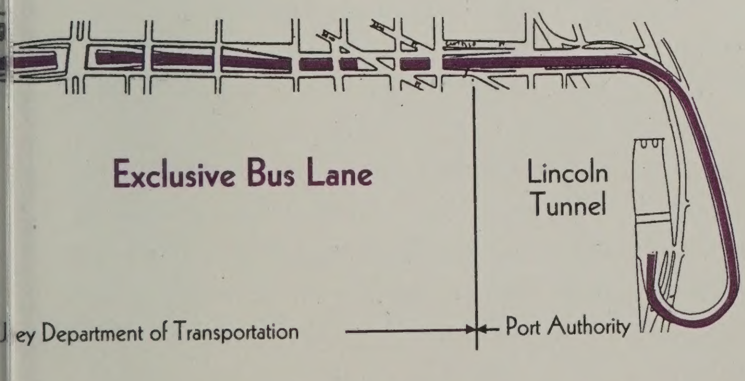
Lincoln Tunnel Exclusive Bus L

(Exclusive Bus Lane)

*What is the **XBL**?* The XBL is a dedicated contra-flow bus lane that operates weekday mornings between 6:30 a.m. and approximately 10:00 a.m. The XBL is part of a transportation network that includes the New Jersey Turnpike, Route 495, the Lincoln Tunnel and the Port Authority Bus Terminal. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey is responsible for the daily operation, maintenance and traffic enforcement of the lane from the point at which buses merge from the north and south, known as the "teardrop," through the Lincoln Tunnel and into the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

The XBL's purpose is to facilitate the use of mass transportation. In fact, commuting by bus has become so popular that the XBL is now operating at maximum capacity. Each day approximately 1700 buses, carrying more than 60,000 commuters, use the XBL. This amounts to approximately 419,000 buses annually carrying over 15 million passengers.

"Did you know..." The XBL was the first contra-flow bus lane on a U.S. highway. Since 1970, similar lanes have opened in our region and in other states. The XBL was initially designed as a coordinated effort among The Port Authority, The New Jersey Turnpike Authority and The New Jersey Department of Transportation. Following the successful completion of the first year, the XBL became a permanent operation under the jurisdiction of the Port Authority.



on NewJersey Approach

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& FAQs

The XBL is 2.5 miles long and must be set up daily to prepare for the morning rush. Operation and maintenance of the XBL requires a highly coordinated effort and a consistent starting time to ensure reliability and safety. Lane set up begins at 4 a.m. and includes positioning over 575 traffic delineators in place to mark the lane. All overhead traffic devices are checked each morning to ensure that motorists can identify which lanes are available.

Access to the XBL is limited to buses with a seating capacity of sixteen or more passengers. To ensure safety, reduce lane overload and maximize mass transportation capacity, access to the XBL is limited to regular "for hire" public buses. School buses, vans, taxis, limousines and other multiple-occupancy vehicles are prohibited.

Buses using the XBL must be equipped with ***E-ZPass***℠. This requirement has helped facilitate traffic flow.

The XBL keeps some 10,000 cars off the road each day, easing congestion and improving air quality.

Frequently asked questions:

*What causes delays and congestion in the **XBL**?*
The XBL is part of a large and complex transportation network and disruption on any part negatively impacts the entire system. For example, if an incident on the northbound New Jersey Turnpike causes delays to northbound traffic during the morning rush, vehicles will backup along westbound Route 495. This backup will quickly reach the westbound Lincoln Tunnel, delaying traffic in New York. As soon as the Lincoln Tunnel is impacted, empty buses are no longer able to exit the Port Authority Bus Terminal. If empty buses cannot exit, full buses cannot enter.

A strong economy and increased overall traffic are contributing factors to XBL congestion. From 1996 to 1998, we experienced a 4.9% increase in bus activity at the Lincoln Tunnel. While the average number of buses using the XBL daily is 1680, the number of days

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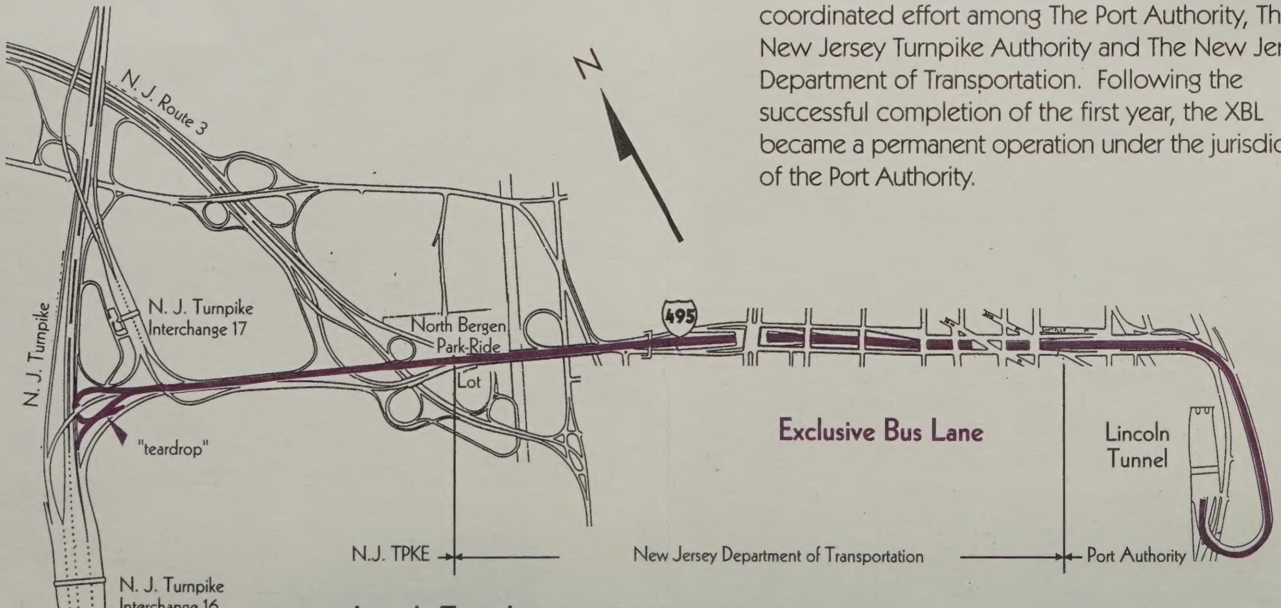
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A strong economy and increased overall traffic are contributing factors to XBL congestion. From 1996 to 1998, we experienced a 4.9% increase in bus activity at the Lincoln Tunnel. While the average number of buses using the XBL daily is 1680, the number of days of high demand has grown substantially. In 1998, nearly one-third of the days the XBL served more than 1700 buses - only 3% of the days in 1995 experienced these volumes.

*How long does it take to clear a bus breakdown in the **XBL**?* Our goal is to identify and remove disabled buses from the XBL in less than ten minutes. Most of the time this goal is accomplished. Closed circuit television is used to monitor the XBL and staff is strategically placed along the route to respond to stoppages. However, due to the extraordinary demand on the XBL, even a minor stoppage that is removed quickly can cause substantial residual delays. For example, a single disabled bus stopped in the XBL for 10 minutes at 7:40 a.m. could easily cause residual delays of up to one-half hour for buses arriving at 8:40 a.m.

This condition is known as the "accordion effect" and results from the compression of buses stopping behind the disabled vehicle. Buses will compress, lining up "nose to end." When the disabled bus is removed, buses slowly start separating apart. Given the slow acceleration characteristics of buses and the merge at the teardrop, the accordion effect impacts buses that arrive after a stoppage.

*Do you reroute buses if there is a problem in the **XBL**?* We do reroute buses into the regular eastbound lane if clearance of an incident or disabled bus is expected to be lengthy. With the technology we have available at this time, the length of a delay cannot be easily predicted, making it difficult to determine whether rerouting to the eastbound roadway is better than staying in the XBL. However, we are presently installing new traffic monitoring systems that will allow us to make more precise routing decisions. Also, bus drivers always have the option of using the regular eastbound roadway if there is a problem in the XBL.

*Where can buses exit the **XBL**?* There are two exits located in the XBL. One is at the beginning of the XBL where buses from the north and south merge. The other is across from the entrance to Route 3 West. However, once your bus passes this point, your driver will not be able to exit the XBL to take another route. We cannot add more exit areas because the barriers that separate the XBL from

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opposing traffic cannot be removed. Any opening or breach of the divider would pose serious traffic safety hazards.

B*uses from the north (NJ Turnpike Interchange 17E and Route 3) merge twice to enter the* ***XBL****, while buses from the south (Interchange 16E) only merge once. Why is this necessary?* Unfortunately, geography and the lack of available space prevent elimination of the double merge. However, we are presently investigating the feasibility of a new traffic metering system for the merge points. This system uses traffic signals to control the flow of merging buses. Traffic metering can increase traffic flow and reduce delays.

W*hat is being done to improve the flow of traffic in the* ***XBL****?* Our challenge is to find effective solutions to help maintain an efficient flow of buses into Manhattan and the Port Authority is working hard to meet that challenge. We are installing electronic readers at various locations to help monitor bus movements and more accurately identify breakdowns and travel time, allowing us to make more informed routing decisions. We are also planning an Intelligent Transportation System for the Lincoln Tunnel that will integrate traffic management functions and automate activities such as incident detection, customer information and inter-agency coordination. Such approaches will help us manage the XBL as reliably and efficiently as possible.

We are currently discussing bus maintenance practices with bus carriers in an effort to minimize breakdowns that cause delays. We are also discussing improvements in communication of delay information. Along with The New Jersey Turnpike Authority, New Jersey Transit and The New Jersey Department of Transportation, the Port Authority is working to find ways to reduce congestion and expand capacity in the XBL and connecting roadways. Some options will involve minor operational improvements, while others may involve more extensive physical improvements. The objective is to immediately address the challenges of increased demand, while advancing solutions that will secure the effectiveness of mass transportation well into the future. We will keep you informed of our progress. Thank you for using mass transit.

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